(b) The main small cardamom producing States are Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and the major large cardamom producing States are Sikkim and West Bengal.

(c) The Spices Board has taken a number of programmes, both short terms and long term for increasing productivity of Cardamom, (both small and large), which include:

(i) Scheme for rendering extension support to growers.

(ii) Production and supply of high yielding quality planting materials.

(iii) Replantation

(iv) Development of infrastructure for water sources in cardamom plantation.

(v) Opening demonstration for encouraging the farmers on scientific cultivation.

(Sources: Spices Board)

Work Load of Ordnance Factories

4898. SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of orders constituting the work–load with the ordnance factories in general and the Vehicle Factory, Jabalpur in particular as on March 31, 1991 June 30, 1991 and September 30, 1991, respectively;

(b) whether the ordnance factories are normally expected to have work–load for the following four years at any point of time;

(c) whether the Government often resorts to purchase of defence items from the private sector, despite availability of adequate capacity and competence with the Defence Ordnance Factories;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Government propose to close down some of the sick Ordnance Factories;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the steps being taken to revive the sick factories to health and viability?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) It is not in public interest to disclose the information sought for.

(b) To enable advance planning, Ordnance Factories would like to have a forecast of the work–load for four years. However it may not be possible for the Armed Forces to furnish such forecasts for every item because of the changing threat–perception and budgetary constraints.

(c) and (d). Procurement from civil sector. (including private sector) of items, for which Ordnance factories are the nominated production agency, is resorted to only after utilising of the capacities in the Ordnance factories.

(e) to (g). Since the Ordnance Factories are Departmental Undertakings, working on 'no profit no loss' basis, the concept of sick units does not apply to them. There is no proposal to close down any of them. The factories currently suffering from under–utilisation of capacity have been directed to diversify into non–defence production and exports. Performance of the Ordnance Factories is being closely monitored to improve their productivity and financial performance.